

Message Text

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41

ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 CIEP-01 EUR-12 /069 W

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R 191224Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7276

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AMGT, PFOR, NI, US

SUBJECT: PORT HARCOURT CONSULATE

1. ACCORDING TO DAILY TIMES, FMG COMMISSIONER EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ARIKPO, IN ANSWER TO QUESTION DURING WEEKEND TELEVISION INTERVIEW IN ENUGU, SAID CERTAIN COUNTRIES WOULD REESTABLISH CONSULAR SERVICES IN THREE EASTERN STATES. PAPER REPORT THAT ARIKPO ADDED THAT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MEA AND RESPECTIVE EMBASSIES IN LAGOS ARE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY AND THAT EMBASSIES CONCERNED WOULD THEMSELVES DECIDE IN WHICH STATE CAPITALS THEY WISH OPEN OFFICES.

2. COMMENT: REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO ARIKPO ARE FIRST REFERENCE TO POSSIBILITY OF ADDITIONAL CONSULATES WE HAVE SEEN FOR SOMETIME. NEITHER WE NOR U.K. HAVE HAD ANY RECENT DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT WITH FMG, AND WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE ARIKPO'S REMARKS HAVE BEEN, PERHAPS WISHFULLY, DISTORTED IN ENUGU. THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN GREAT INTEREST IN THE EASTERN STATES IN ESTABLISHMENT OF FOREIGN CONSULATES THERE, AND TOURING EMBOFFS ARE REGULARLY QUERIED ON PLANS TO REOPEN CONSULAR OFFICES CLOSED DURING CIVIL WAR. THUS, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT INTERVIEWER INCLUDED THIS AMONG QUESTIONS PUT TO ARIKPO. WE SUSPECT ARIKPO SAID IN REPLY THAT THE MATTER HAS BEEN UNDER DISCUSSION (AT VARIOUS TIMES DURING PAST FOUR YEARS) AND THAT SUBJECT REMAINS "UNDER STUDY".
END COMMENT

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3. WHILE WE THUS DO NOT BELIEVE THERE IS IN FACT ANY NEW
MOVEMENT ON THIS FRONT, WE WILL SEEK APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY OVER
COMING WEEKS TO MAKE DISCREET INQUIRIES AS TO WHETHER ANY
PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO ARIKPO REMARKS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSULATES, CONSULATE OPENING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LAGOS11591
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740369-0645
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741223/aaaaatfj.tel
Line Count: 66
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 SEP 2002 by WorrelSW>; APPROVED <18 MAR 2003 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PORT HARCOURT CONSULATE
TAGS: AMGT, PFOR, NI, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005